

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of distributing flexible bags filled with a beverage or liquid food product under sterile conditions to a consumer of said beverage or liquid food product in return for payment and comprising the steps of:

a) filling said flexible bags through a spout or tap forming part of each flexible bag and acting as both a filling inlet and dispensing outlet and thereby avoiding residue from a form, fill and sealing process, the filling occurring under sterile conditions, said flexible bags having been previously sealed in a manufacturing process;

b) locating said flexible bags, filled with said beverage or liquid food product, in a bulk transport container not used for dispensing the product to an end consumer and having a capacity for a plurality of flexible bags while protecting the bags from damage and contamination of beverage or liquid food product during transportation, ~~the bulk transport container not used for dispensing the product to an end consumer;~~

c) transportation, by a commercial distributor, of the bulk transport container~~[[,]]~~ in which the filled flexible bags are located, ~~to a consumer of said beverage or liquid food product~~ for protection from damage and contamination to the consumer, the bulk transport containers separate from a transportation conveyance used by the commercial distributor to transport the bulk containers;

d) unloading a required quantity of flexible bags filled with beverage or liquid food product for delivery to the consumer; and

e) delivering each flexible bag for dispensing the beverage or liquid food product contained in the flexible bag to be consumed by the end consumer, ~~and~~ wherein, through each step, a hazard and critical control points system is maintained during filling, distribution and dispensing ~~are minimized~~ so that beverage or food liquid product is delivered to the end consumer for consumption without taint or adverse effect.

2. (canceled)

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the commercial distributor fills the flexible bags.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said beverage contained in a flexible bag is drinking water.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein said distribution method is "one way" without recovery of flexible bags for re-use.

6. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein said commercial distributor positions said flexible bag containing water in a dispenser for delivery of the water to the end consumer

7. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein said commercial distributor supplies and maintains the dispenser in return for payment.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said bulk transport container is of a variable capacity adaptive to varying quantities of flexible bags in accordance with consumer demand.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein said bulk transport container is of a cubic design having a smooth wall and base construction thereby reducing risk of damage to, and contamination of, said flexible bags.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said bulk transport container is made of a polymer suitable for use in food grade environments.

11. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein the flexible bag incorporates at least one handle.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein said flexible bag is positioned in said dispenser by hanging from said at least one handle.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein said flexible bag, when positioned in said dispenser by hanging from said at least one handle, allows substantially complete drainage of the liquid contents from said flexible bag.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein said dispenser has a housing having a base, the base being angled with respect to a vertical axis of the housing, to allow substantially complete drainage of the liquid contents from said flexible bag.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein said housing of said dispenser has an inner wall and a shield is located between said flexible bag and said inner wall of said housing to protect a lower portion of the flexible bag from damage.

16-19. (canceled)

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the beverage or liquid food product is dispensed through a tap fitted to a bag and forming part thereof, the tap having an actuator to actuate flow of liquid through the tap; and a ribbed end to allow fitting of the tap into a bag tap hole having a smooth internal bore.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 20 wherein the commercial distributor fills the flexible bags.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said flexible bag is located in a dispenser having capacity for only a single flexible bag at a time.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the flexible bags is a collapsible bag and wherein a base of said bag has seams arranged to form ~~is formed with a surface variation~~ to maintain a pocket within said collapsible bag and facilitate drainage of liquid product from said bag during dispensing.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein said surface variation is a contour.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~23-1~~ wherein a base of at least one of said flexible bags ~~said surface variation~~ includes creases ~~forming peaks and valleys~~ to facilitate drainage of liquid product from said bag during dispensing.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~23~~1 wherein at least one of the flexible bags is a collapsible bag and at least part of said collapsible bag is an oxygen barrier.

27. (new) A method of distributing flexible bags filled with a beverage or liquid food product under sterile conditions to a consumer of said beverage or liquid food product in return for payment and comprising the steps of:

a) filling said flexible bags through a spout or tap forming part of each flexible bag and acting as both a filling inlet and dispensing outlet thereby avoiding residue from a form, fill and sealing process, said flexible bags having been previously sealed in a manufacturing process;

b) locating said flexible bags, filled with beverage or liquid food product, in a bulk transport container not used for dispensing the product to an end consumer and having capacity for containing a plurality of flexible bags while protecting the bags from damage and contamination of beverage or liquid food product during transportation;

c) transportation, by a commercial distributor, of the bulk transport container, in which the filled flexible bags are located for protection from damage and contamination to the consumer;

d) unloading a required quantity of flexible bags filled with beverage or liquid food product for delivery to the consumer; and

e) delivering each flexible bag for dispensing the beverage or liquid food product contained in the flexible bag to be consumed by the end consumer;

wherein, through each step, a hazard and critical control points system is maintained during filling, distribution and dispensing so that beverage or liquid food product is delivered to the end consumer for consumption without taint or adverse effect and wherein a flexible bag includes seams arranged, such that when the flexible bag is located within a dispenser, said seams form a funnel or contour at a base of the flexible bag to facilitate drainage of liquid product from the flexible bag.

28. (new) A method of distributing flexible bags filled with a beverage or liquid food product under sterile conditions to a consumer of said beverage or liquid food product in return for payment and comprising the steps of:

a) filling said flexible bags through a spout or tap forming part of each flexible bag and acting as both a filling inlet and dispensing outlet thereby avoiding residue from a form, fill and sealing process, said flexible bags having been previously sealed in a manufacturing process;

b) locating said flexible bags, filled with beverage or liquid food product, in a bulk transport container not used for dispensing the product to an end consumer and having capacity for containing a plurality of flexible bags while protecting the bags from damage and contamination of beverage or liquid food product during transportation;

c) transportation, by a commercial distributor, of the bulk transport container, in which the filled flexible bags are located for protection from damage and contamination to the consumer;

d) unloading a required quantity of flexible bags filled with beverage or liquid food product for delivery to the consumer; and

e) delivering each flexible bag for dispensing the beverage or liquid food product contained in the flexible bag to be consumed by the end consumer;

wherein, through each step, a hazard and critical control points system is maintained during filling, distribution and dispensing so that beverage or liquid food product is delivered to the end consumer for consumption without taint or adverse effect and wherein each flexible bag includes a handle and is positioned in said dispenser by hanging from said at least one handle to assist drainage of the liquid contents from said flexible bag during dispensing.